Met Office

NEWS

Warm May continues the theme of Spring

Author: Press Office
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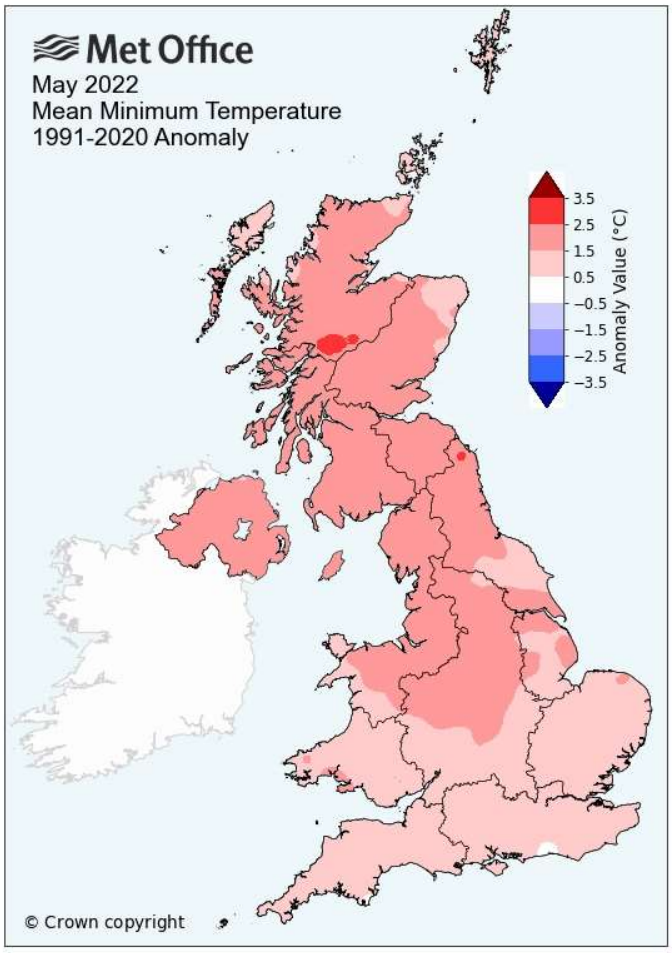
A warm May – spurred on by high overnight temperatures – concluded a Spring that goes down as the fifth warmest on record for the UK, according to provisional statistics from the Met Office.

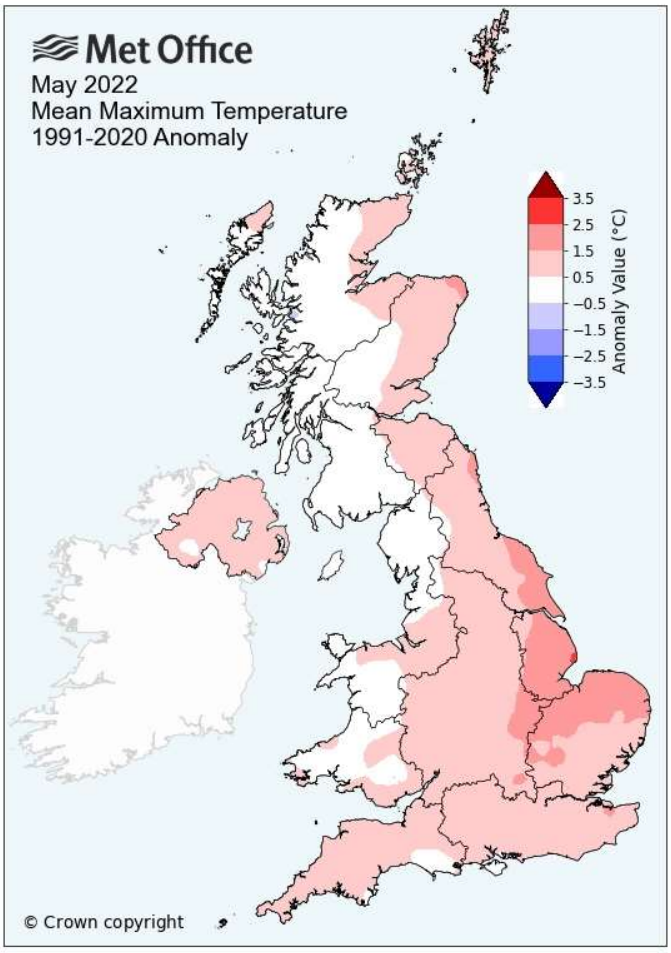
May headlines

- 5th warmest May on record, by mean temperature
- Highest average daily minimum temperatures for May on record
- Below-average sunshine hours

According to a series that goes back to 1884, May 2022 was the fifth warmest on record, thanks largely to record-breaking overnight temperatures, with northern and western areas recording particularly high overnight temperatures for the time of year.

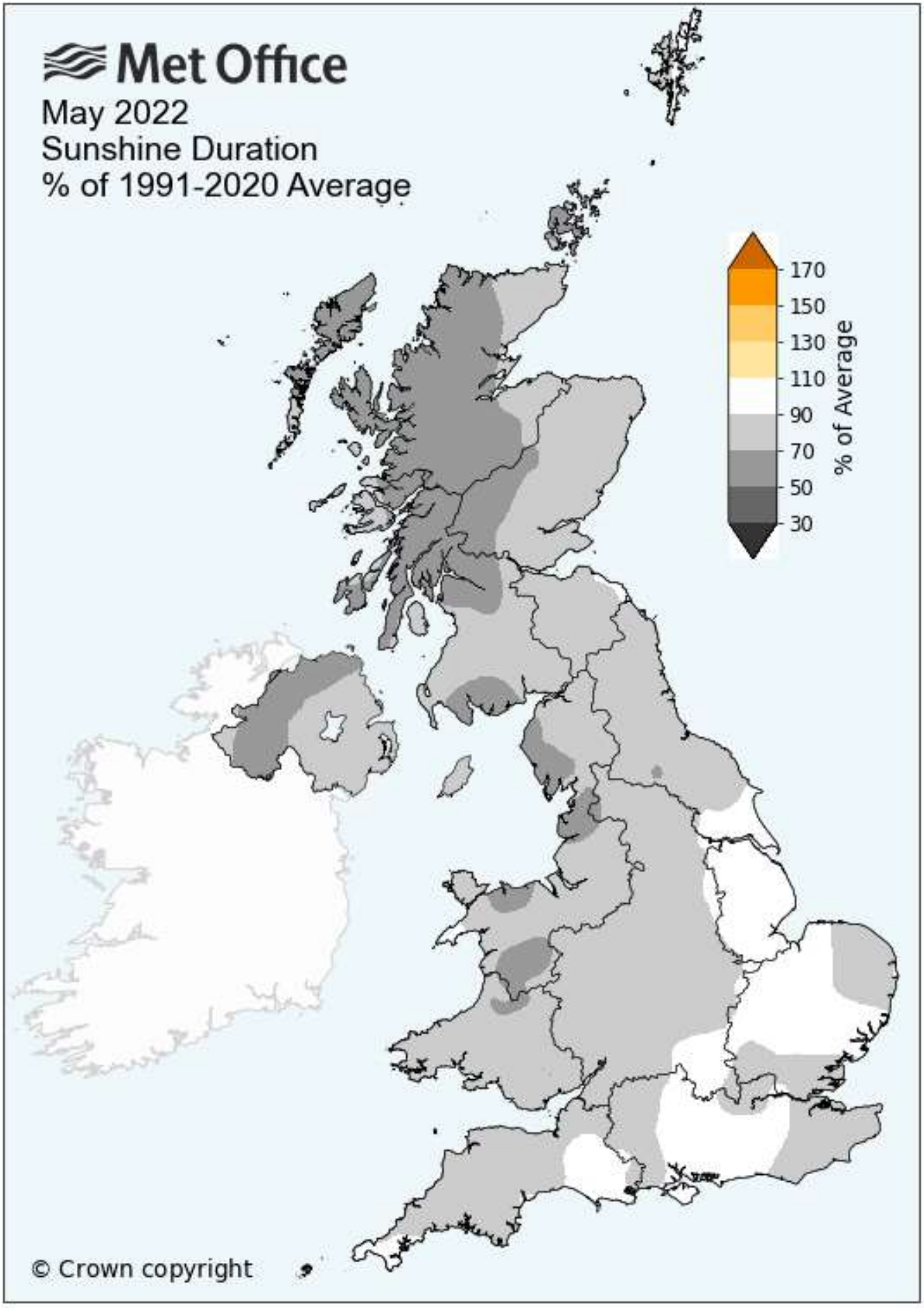
Mean temperatures for the UK stood at 11.8°C, some 1.2°C above the long-term average, but these figures were largely spurred on by average minimum temperatures of 7.8°C, which is 1.5°C above average.





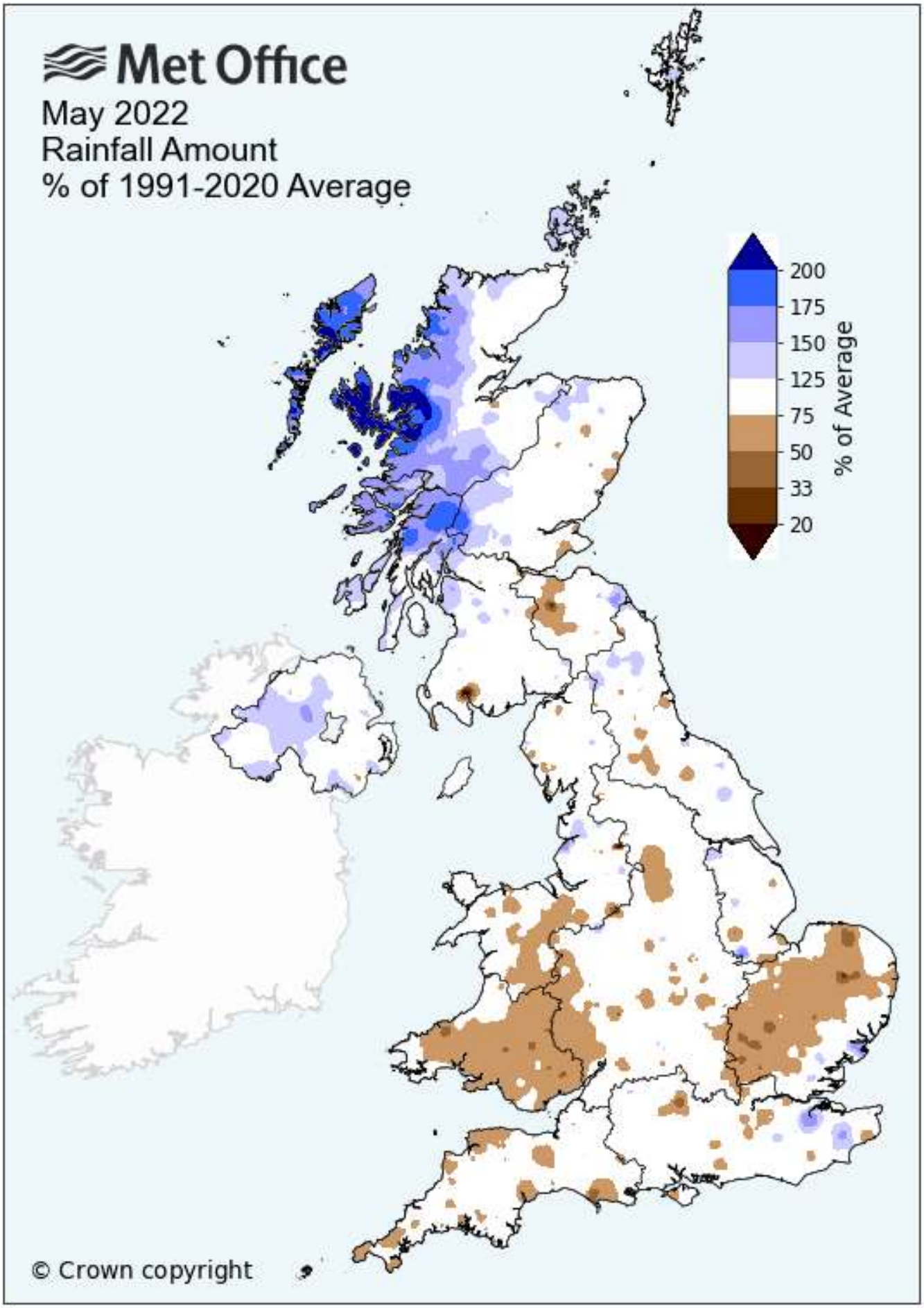
Average maximum temperatures for the month were 0.8°C above average, which is not enough to trouble any temperature records. The highest individual temperature recorded in the month was 27.5°C at Heathrow on 17 May.

Interestingly, despite the high mean temperatures, the number of sunshine hours has been below average for the month, with northern and western areas being particularly dull. Sunshine hours were down by around a fifth from the long-term average, with 152.8 hours in the UK.



Rainfall amounts for the month were near-average for the UK, albeit with quite a marked difference between different areas. England had 50.7mm of rain (89% of average), Wales 63.2mm (73% of average), Scotland 118.3mm (133% of average) and Northern Ireland 89mm (120% of average).

Going even more granular, the north of Scotland saw 54% more rainfall than average with 148mm of rain in the month.



Dr Mark McCarthy of the National Climate Information Centre said: “High minimum temperatures are the most notable statistic coming from May’s provisional figures, helping to bring mean temperatures for the month into the top five on record for May.

“Cloud cover has been one part of the picture for the higher-than-average minimum temperatures, with overcast skies helping to lock some heat in through the night, especially in northern and western areas. Warmer air from the continent has helped keep minimum temperatures up in the south and despite that lack of daytime sunshine, maximum temperatures have remained above-average for most, although without any prolonged spells of very high daytime temperatures.”

End of May statistics

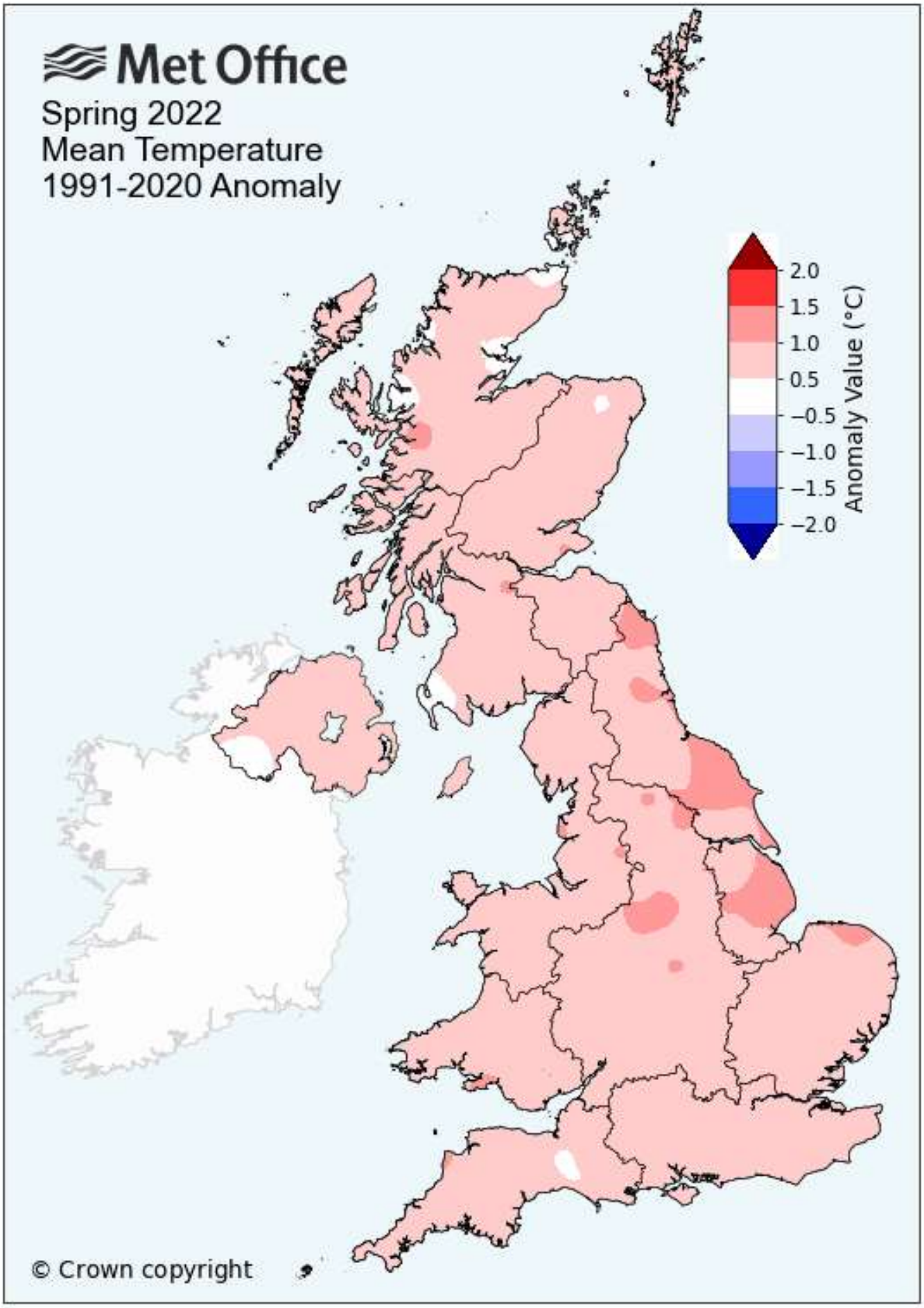
	Maximum temp		Minimum temp		Mean temp		Rainfall		Sunshine	
Area	Actual temp (°C)	Anomaly (°c)	Actual temp (°C)	Anomaly (°C)	Actual temp (°C)	Anomaly (°C)	Actual (mm)	Anomaly (%)	Actual (hours)	Anomaly (%)
UK	15.9	0.8	7.8	1.5	11.8	1.2	75.7	107	152.8	79
England	17.3	1.1	8.3	1.3	12.8	1.2	50.7	89	170.3	85
Wales	15.7	0.5	8.0	1.4	11.8	1.0	63.2	73	146.4	77
Scotland	13.8	0.4	6.8	1.9	10.2	1.1	118.3	133	128.7	71
N. Ireland	15.5	0.7	8.1	1.9	11.9	1.4	89.0	120	132.1	72

Spring headlines

- 5th warmest Spring by mean temperature
- Around a quarter less rain than average
- Varied sunshine figures through the season

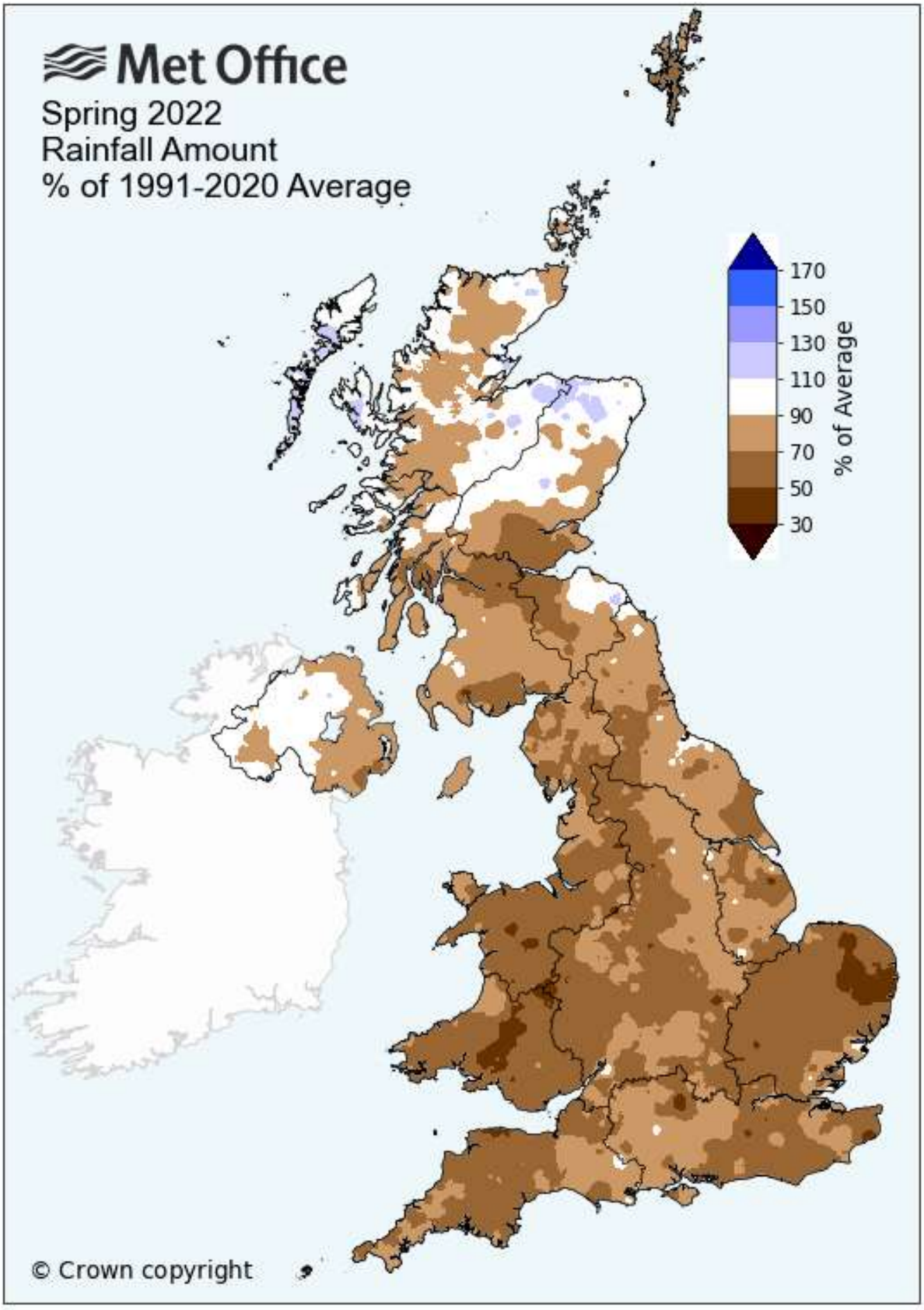
The warm theme continues when looking at Spring as a whole (March, April and May). The UK had its fifth warmest spring on record according to mean temperature, with England (5th), Scotland (6th), Northern Ireland (7th) and Wales (7th) all seeing average temperatures in their top 10 warmest since the series began in 1884.

UK average mean temperatures for the season stood at 8.87°C, which is 0.8°C above the long-term average. That warm theme was replicated across the UK with England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland all seeing mean temperatures over 0.7°C above their long-term averages.

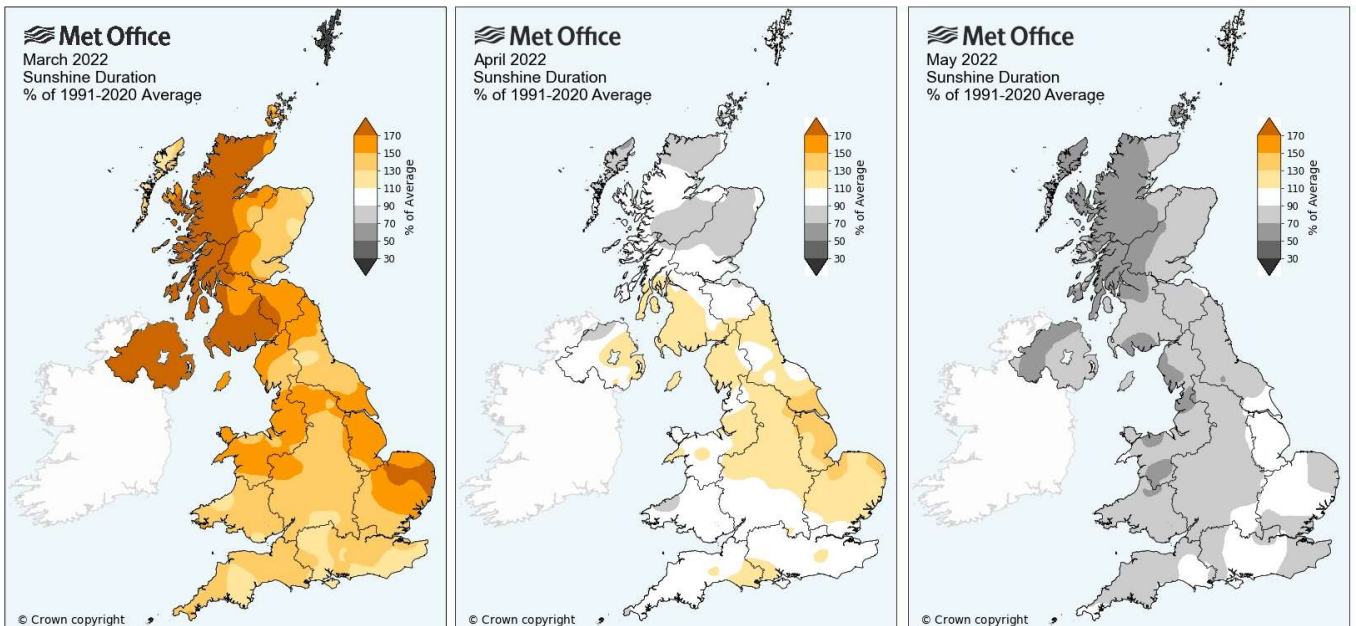


Rainfall was in short supply in March and April, with 58% and 68% of average rainfall for the UK respectively during these months. Despite May seeing rainfall closer to average for the UK, rainfall for the season is still down by around a quarter, with 174.1mm of rain (76% of average). Only northern areas of Scotland and some of Northern Ireland got nearer to their

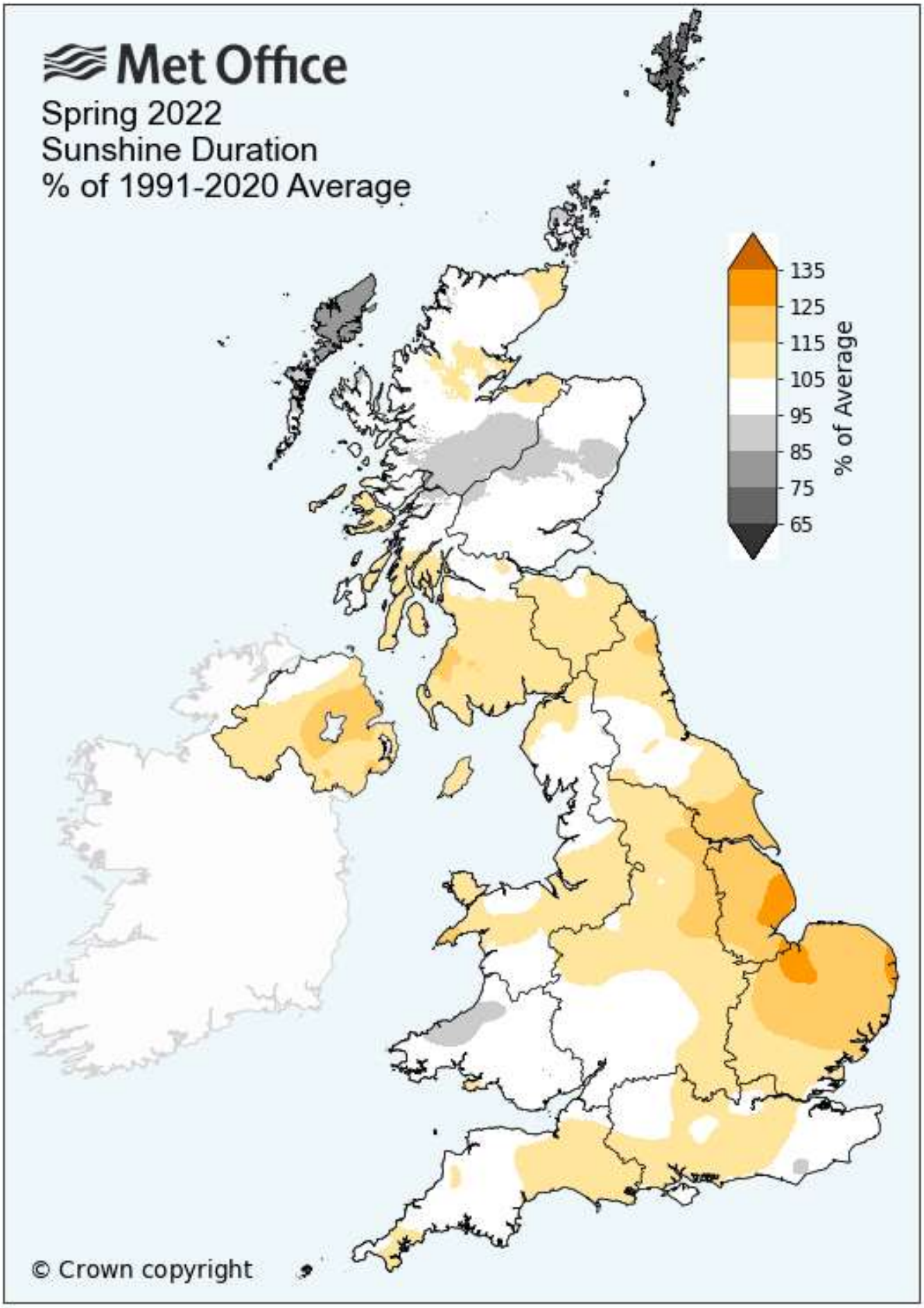
average rainfall totals for the season, with a fairly dry season for almost anywhere else in the UK, although not dry enough to trouble any records.



Hours of sunshine were the most varied of the statistics through the three-month period. The UK had its sunniest March since 1929 and its second sunniest overall (records date back to 1919), while April also saw above average sunshine levels. However, May saw a slump in the figures with fairly frequent cloud cover, especially in the north.



This has resulted in near-average sunshine figures for Spring as a whole, the UK seeing around 6% more sunshine in the season than average, with 485 hours of sunshine. Sunniest areas for the season were found in the east, while western areas of Scotland were generally slightly behind their average figures for the season.



Mark McCarthy of the National Climate Information Centre said: “Spring 2022 has been rather warmer, drier and sunnier than the average Spring overall, with only a few interludes of more unsettled spells of weather.

“Eastern coasts have been the sunniest relative to average, while the season has been fairly dry, despite closer to average rainfall in May.”

End of Spring statistics

	Maximum temp		Minimum temp		Mean temp		Rainfall		Sunshine	
Area	Actual temp (°C)	Anomaly (°c)	Actual temp (°C)	Anomaly (°C)	Actual temp (°C)	Anomaly (°C)	Actual (mm)	Anomaly (%)	Actual (hours)	Anomaly (%)
UK	13.22	1.09	4.55	0.48	8.87	0.80	174.1	76	485.0	106
England	14.28	1.16	5.18	0.54	9.74	0.86	117.3	68	523.5	109
Wales	13.34	1.1	4.75	0.31	9.05	0.74	161.4	58	465.7	102
Scotland	11.46	1.02	3.4	0.41	7.39	0.72	265.9	87	425.7	101
N. Ireland	13.01	0.90	4.70	0.50	8.86	0.72	209.6	89	481.7	111

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